

# Railway safety saves lives

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Nearly every 90 minutes in the United States, a person or car on railroad rights-of-way, is struck by a train.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration, in 1996 there were 4,257 highway-railroad grade crossing collisions in the United States, resulting in 488 fatalities and 1,610 injuries.

Last year, there were also 471 trespass fatalities and 474 injuries across the nation. FRA reports that the majority of incidents are caused by driver error, or people illegally present on railroad tracks.

Motorist error — especially the violation of traffic laws relating to grade crossings — is by far the single most significant factor in grade crossing collisions. In addition to deliberate disregard for warning devices, common motorist errors include misjudgments of speed and stopping capabilities, misunderstanding of warning signs, signals and distraction.

In 1998, there were 261,266 highway-rail grade crossings. Highway-rail crossings are classified by type of warning device in place, which is either active or passive. Active devices warn roadway users of the approach or presence of a train, usually with gates, flashing lights, bells or highway traffic signals. Passive warning devices alert motorists of the existence of a highway-rail crossing; they do not actively signal the approach of a train.

In Montana, there are 3,293 miles of operated freight railroads carrying more than 84 million tons of cargo.

In Great Falls, people encounter at least three highway-rail crossings in everyday travels; two passive crossings on the river road truck route by-pass, and the active crossing right next to Applebee's. How many motorists have been driving along river road (at 45 mph) going to the golf course or a Dodger's game and

had to stop behind a bus checking the crossing only to blow right through it when it's their turn to cross?

Despite the ongoing problems at highway-rail grade crossings, improvement in recent years has been dramatic. These improvements are the product of cooperation between federal, state and railroad entities that have focused on collision prevention through engineering improvements, education and enforcement. The Highway Safety Act of 1973 created and funded (Section 130 Program) specifically dedicated to enhanced safety at highway-rail grade crossings. Each year, \$160 million Section 130 funds and an additional \$200 million from railroads is spent to operate and maintain crossings.

Much more, however, remains to be done. And since the vast majority of all highway-rail grade crossings result from motorist error and violation of applicable traffic laws, public cooperation is essential.

## Safety Stampede Standings

341st MDG <b>Hawkeyes</b> .....	22
341st LG <b>Guardians</b> .....	17
10th MS <b>Aces</b> .....	13
819th RHS <b>Charging Charlies</b> .....	11
341st OG/OSS <b>Eagles</b> .....	8
12th MS <b>Red Dawgs</b> .....	7
341st SPTG/SW <b>Sentinels</b> .....	7
490th MS <b>Farsiders</b> .....	6
564th MS <b>Dueces</b> .....	2
741st SFS <b>Warriors</b> .....	2
341st CPTS <b>Dollar Dogs</b> .....	2

## SAFETY SCRAMBLE

Unscramble these four words, one letter each square, to form four ordinary words.

**KREOCT**  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

**SLEMOR**  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

**HOARC**  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

**FLABFE**  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Ans.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □  
(Answers next week)

Scrambles: SAFETY COOKED PIECE REALLY

Last week's

Answer: What each of us is in a friend's life -- A "KEY" PLAYER



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